

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

- 5     1. A vehicle and indicator apparatus comprising:  
      a remote-controlled vehicle;  
      a power supply operably connected to the remote-controlled vehicle;  
      a low-power indicator circuit operably connected to the power supply; and  
      at least one low-power indicator operably connected to the low-power indicator circuit  
10    and configured to be enabled when a low-power condition is present.
2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the at least one low-power indicator comprises a  
      visible indicator mounted on the remote-controlled vehicle.
- 15    3. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the visible indicator comprises a streamer device.
4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the streamer device comprises:  
      a selectively-openable chamber formed on the remote-controlled vehicle and operably  
      connected to the low-power indicator circuit; and  
20    at least one streamer housed within the chamber and attached on one end to the chamber  
      such that opening the chamber under control of the low-power indicator circuit releases the  
      at least one streamer so as to stream behind the remote-controlled vehicle and visibly  
      indicate low power.
- 25    5. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the visible indicator comprises a flag device.
6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the flag device comprises:

a staff mounted to the remote-controlled vehicle so as to have a pivotable fixed end and an opposite free end, the staff being operably connected to the low-power indicator circuit; and

5 a flag attached to the staff substantially at the free end such that pivoting the staff about the fixed end under control of the low-power indicator circuit extends the free end away from the remote-controlled vehicle so as to fly the flag and visibly indicate low power.

7. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the visible indicator comprises a smoke device, the smoke device comprising a smoke source formed on the remote-controlled vehicle and  
10 operably connected to the low-power indicator circuit such that actuating the smoke source under control of the low-power indicator circuit releases smoke from the smoke source so as to emanate from the remote-controlled vehicle and visibly indicate low power.

15 8. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the at least one low-power indicator comprises an audible indicator mounted on the remote-controlled vehicle.

9. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the at least one low-power indicator comprises:  
an audible indicator mounted on the remote-controlled vehicle so as to be selectively  
20 audible at a selected distance from the remote-controlled vehicle; and  
a visible indicator mounted on the remote-controlled vehicle so as to be selectively visible at a selected distance from the remote-controlled vehicle.

10. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein:  
25 the power supply provides an operating voltage within a predetermined voltage range having a nominal voltage; and  
the low-power indicator circuit is configured to detect the operating voltage and to enable actuation of the at least one low-power indicator when the operating voltage falls outside the voltage range.

11. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the at least one low-power indicator comprises a visible indicator mounted on the remote-controlled vehicle.

5 12. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the at least one low-power indicator comprises an audible indicator and a visible indicator mounted on the remote-controlled vehicle.

13. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein:

the low-power indicator circuit is configured to detect when the operating voltage is within a first outside range defined as outside the voltage range and no more than a cut-off percentage below the nominal voltage and to enable actuation of the audible indicator when the operating voltage falls within the first outside range; and

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the low-power indicator circuit is further configured to detect when the operating voltage is within a second outside range defined as more than the cut-off percentage below the nominal voltage and to enable actuation of the visible indicator when the operating voltage falls within the second outside range.

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14. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the low-power indicator circuit is configured to detect when the operating voltage is within an outside range defined as more than a cut-off percentage below the nominal voltage and to enable simultaneous actuation of the audible and visual indicators when the operating voltage falls within the outside range.

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15. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein:

the power supply comprises an engine and a tank providing fuel to the engine, the tank including a fuel gage configured with a low level setting; and

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the low-power indicator circuit is operably connected to the fuel gage and is configured to enable actuation of the at least one low-power indicator when the fuel in the tank falls to the low level setting.

16. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a controller configured to enable remote control of the remote-controlled vehicle, wherein the at least one low-power indicator comprises a visible indicator mounted on the controller.
- 5 17. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the remote-controlled vehicle is selected from the group consisting of a land vehicle, a boat, and an aircraft.
18. A vehicle and indicator apparatus comprising:  
a remote-controlled vehicle;  
10 a power supply operably connected to the remote-controlled vehicle;  
a low-power indicator circuit operably connected to the power supply; and  
a means for indicating low power of the power supply operably connected to the low-power indicator circuit.
- 15 19. A vehicle and indicator apparatus comprising:  
a remote-controlled vehicle;  
a power supply operably connected to the remote-controlled vehicle;  
a low-power indicator circuit operably connected to the power supply; and  
a mechanical low-power indicator mounted on the remote-controlled vehicle and  
20 operably connected to the low-power indicator circuit.
20. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein the mechanical low-power indicator is selected from the group consisting of a streamer device, a flag device, and a smoke device.
- 25 21. A vehicle and indicator apparatus comprising:  
a remote-controlled vehicle;  
an electrical battery operably connected to the remote-controlled vehicle;  
a low-battery life indicator circuit operably connected to the battery; and

at least one low-battery life indicator operably connected to the low-battery life indicator circuit so as to be deployed when the electrical battery has a low battery life, the low-battery life indicator engaged with the vehicle and visible from an exterior position relative thereto.

- 5 22. A method of indicating low power of a remote-controlled vehicle, comprising the steps of:

operating the remote-controlled vehicle so as to decrease a power supply connected to the remote-controlled vehicle;

- 10 detecting a low power condition of the power supply as the remote-controlled vehicle is operated; and

actuating at least one low-power indicator when the low power condition is detected to indicate low power of the power supply.

23. The method of claim 22 comprising the further steps of:

- 15 detecting an operating voltage of the power supply as the remote-controlled vehicle is operated;

comparing the operating voltage to a desired voltage range as set in a low-power indicator circuit operably connected to the power supply; and

- 20 controlling the actuation of the at least one low-power indicator through the low-power indicator circuit.

24. The method of claim 23 comprising the further steps of:

setting a first outside range in the low-power indicator circuit;

- 25 actuating an audible indicator of the at least one low-power indicator when the operating voltage falls within the first outside range;

setting a second outside range in the low-power indicator circuit; and

actuating a visible indicator of the at least one low-power indicator when the operating voltage falls within the second outside range.

25. The method of claim 22 comprising the further steps of:

detecting a fuel level in a tank providing fuel to an engine as the remote-controlled vehicle is operated;

5 comparing the fuel level to a low level setting of a fuel gage operably connected to a low-power indicator circuit; and

controlling the actuation of the at least one low-power indicator through the low-power indicator circuit.

26. The method of claim 22 comprising the further steps of:

10 operably connecting a low-power indicator circuit to the power supply;

mounting the at least one low-power indicator on the remote-controlled vehicle so as to be mechanically operated by the low-power indicator circuit;

operating the at least one low-power indicator under control of the low-power indicator circuit to visibly extend the at least one low-power indicator from the remote-controlled vehicle.  
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